

〔報 告〕

## Extensive Reading in the Language Classroom: A literature review

### 語学授業における多読：研究レビュー

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**Abstract :** This paper reviews recent research into the efficacy of extensive reading in the language classroom. The introduction defines extensive reading, and contrasts it with intensive reading. Subsequent sections are devoted to the effectiveness of extensive reading in relation to specific cognitive skills such as vocabulary acquisition, grammar, comprehension, and fluency. We also explore the affective benefits of extensive reading on motivation. The discussion section explicates the balance between costs in time and the benefits of utilizing extensive reading in language classes in Japan at the secondary and tertiary level. Suggestions are offered to improve the current situation in language classrooms in Japan, and directions for future research.

**[Keywords]** extensive reading, reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition

**要旨：**本論文は、語学授業における多読 (extensive reading) の効果に関するこれまでの研究についてレビューするものである。序章では多読について定義し、精読 (intensive reading) と対比する。続く章では、特定の認知能力 (語彙習得能力・文法・理解力・流暢さ) との関連における多読の有効性について、及び、動機面での多読の情動的効果について検討する。考察では、日本における中高等レベルの語学授業での、時間コストと多読活用効果のバランスについて詳論する。最後に、日本の語学授業の現状改善のための提案及び今後の研究の方向性を示す。

**【キーワード】** 多読、読解力、語彙習得

#### 1. Introduction

The term extensive reading in the context of foreign language learning dates back to at least 1969, when Harold Palmer used it to describe the reading of large amounts of text quickly (Iwahori 2008; Day 2015). The concept, however, is older than the term; Day (2015) cited research as early as 1955 on the respective degrees of linguistic progress made by learners who read large amounts of text over a long period compared to those who did not. The concept was refined in the intervening decades and studied under such terms as supplementary reading, free voluntary reading, and “book flood.” Book flood was the term used in 1981

program in Fiji widely cited as the pioneering ER study (de Burgh-Hirabe, 2011).

Today, extensive reading usually refers to a specific program in which learners select reading materials individually, read autonomously, and consume a wide range of text (Day & Bamford, 1998). Learners comprehend texts at the discourse level, and continue reading regularly over a long period of time (Waring & McLean, 2015). Day & Bamford (as cited in Waring & McLean, 2015) devised the following list of principles for extensive reading programs which their research showed to be successful, and which are now termed the Ten Principles of Classical ER (Waring &

McLean 2015):

1. The reading material is easy.
2. A variety of reading material on a wide range of topics is available.
3. Learners choose what they want to read.
4. Learners read as much as possible.
5. The purpose of reading is usually related to pleasure, information, and general understanding.
6. Reading is its own reward.
7. Reading speed is usually faster rather than slower.
8. Reading is individual and silent.
9. Teachers orient and guide their students.
10. The teacher is a role model of a reader.

Day (2015) later conceptualized a system for ranking any program with ER-like components according to the number of the above principles to which it adhered.

Extensive reading is also defined in contrast to intensive reading, the deliberate study of a specific passage for the purpose of uncovering grammar, lexis, or semantics (Gorsuch & Taguchi, 2008). Intensive reading involves a much greater teacher role in selection of texts and direction of the course and pace of study (Loucky, 2009). Waring and McLean (2015) wrote that ER referred specifically to “the type of processing students do that allow them to focus on developing fluent comprehension of text for meaning, and not on language features exclusively” (p. 164). Stated simply, extensive reading stresses volume and comprehensibility, while intensive reading stresses concentration and deconstruction. Some researchers have indicated skepticism concerning the degree to which either component by itself is responsible for L2 progress in any program under study (Pulido, 2009).

The effectiveness of ER in both the cognitive (comprehension, grammar, vocabulary acquisition, writing) and affective dimensions of learning is well documented. This research has not been limited to the study of extensive reading in English. Arnold (2009), Maxim (2002), and Rankin (2005) documented the benefits of extensive reading in German L2, while Pigada and Schmitt (2006) cited the benefits of extensive reading in a French L2 context. Han and Cheng-ling (2010)

studied the effect of extended repeated reading in Mandarin, while Leung (2002) studied ER teaching Japanese as the L2. The cognitive benefits of extensive reading include improvements in vocabulary (Horst, 2005; Peyreya, 2015; Pigada & Schmitt, 2006), grammar and comprehension (Bell, 2001; Iwahori, 2008; Lee, Schallert & Kim, 2014; Nation, 2015; Pulido, 2009), fluency (or reading speed) (Sakurai, 2015; Taguchi, Takayasu-Maass & Gorsuch, 2004), and writing (Janopoulos, 2009; Mermelstein, 2015). The affective benefits include broader cultural knowledge (Cirocki, 2009) and greater motivation and satisfaction with language study (Taboada & McElvany, 2009; Takase, 2005). Sivabramaniam (2009) makes the point that multifaceted meanings encountered at the discourse level cannot be approached at comparable depth with intensive reading or translation exercises.

As noted above, research supports the conclusion that reading large amounts of comprehensible L2 text over long periods of time leads to measurable gains in proficiency. It should be expected, then, that ER would be a fundamental component of all foreign language or second language learning programs. However, it is underutilized in English language education programs in Japan. This paper highlights recent research into the effectiveness of ER, with attention to barriers to its implementation, particularly in Japanese universities. We hope that educators and administrators will weigh the benefits against the temporal and financial costs, and consider incorporating ER into L2 programs as a long-term strategy for maximizing gains in proficiency.

## 2. Method

In order to find and select the necessary data, we conducted exhaustive online and manual searches. The educational databases included Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), Research Information Sharing Service (RISS), and the resources of the Walden University Library (EBSCO, JSTOR, etc.). To obtain as complete and comprehensive a picture as possible of extensive reading as a pedagogical tool in language education we examined research from six countries (U.S., China, Japan, India, Vietnam, and Germany). To view the effectiveness of extensive reading in other languages we also read papers on ER in

French L2 (Pigada & Schmitt, 2006), German L2 (Maxim, 2002; Rankin, 2005), Japanese L2 (de Burgh-Hirabe, 2011; Hitosugi & Day, 2004; Leung, 2002), and Mandarin Chinese L2 (Han & Cheng-ling, 2010).

This paper weaves these diverse threads into a cohesive whole that supports the use of extensive reading in foreign language education.

### 3. Results

#### 3-1 Vocabulary acquisition

Recent research shows extensive reading to be an effective tool to enhance vocabulary acquisition in the L2. Although this section explores research into the relationship between vocabulary acquisition and extensive reading, it is first necessary to define the meaning of vocabulary acquisition in the context of both extensive reading and this paper. Acquisition of a vocabulary item comprises three parts: form, meaning, and use. One word family contains a number of forms/spellings, and each of these forms has a different meaning. Waring (2009) has compiled extensive data on word frequency and the volume of text reading needed to give learners adequate exposure to acquire new vocabulary. Learning one dictionary meaning of a single word does not demonstrate acquisition in this context. In addition, the use of the vocabulary item, including collocations, is an important part of acquisition. Readers acquire vocabulary when they focus on the meaning of the text they read, not when focusing on unknown words (Ponniah, 2011).

A number of researchers have explored vocabulary acquisition results of extensive reading (Coady, 1997; Meng, 2009; Nation, 2015; Pigada & Schmitt, 2006; Reynolds & Bai, 2013; Waring & Takaki, 2003). As with other extensive reading components, this research has not been limited to the study of English as the L2. In 2006, Pigada and Schmitt specifically studied the acquisition of French vocabulary through extensive reading in French. At Princeton University, Rankin (2005) explored vocabulary acquisition and lexical chunks in extensive reading of German L2. Han and Cheng-ling (2010) found that extensive repeated reading resulted in vocabulary gains that would not have been possible through conventional reading or vocabulary instruction.

Several variables affect vocabulary acquisition. According to Restrepo Ramos (2015), repeated exposure to words in meaningful collocations is the key to successful vocabulary acquisition. The difficulty of the text has a direct affect (Coady, 1997). It is not comprehensible, but comprehended input that is important (Coady, 1997). A number of researchers have reached the conclusion that no more than 2% of the lexical items on a page should be unknown to the reader (Coady, 1997; Hsueh-Chao & Nation, 2000; Nation, 2015, Schmitt, Jiang & Grabe, 2011).

The pace of vocabulary acquisition and the amount of reading are related. According to Nation, the minimum amount of reading is one book each two weeks, and the minimum amount of time needed to meet the first 1000 words 12 times is 33 minutes per week for a year, at the minimum speed for comprehension (150 words per minute) (Nation, 2015). As shown in Saegusa's research on TOEIC, additional gains at higher skill levels require increasing time commitments (Saegusa, 1985). In the case of vocabulary acquired through extensive reading, to acquire the second thousand words requires a commitment of 50 minutes a week for a year (Nation, 2015).

Both Coady and Nation stress the importance of structure in an extensive reading program. Although the basic principle of extensive reading is reading large amounts at a comprehensible level, that does not obviate the need for structure in the extensive reading program. According to Coady (1997), an effective program consists of reading that is comprehensible and interesting. He also stresses the importance of the teacher as a motivator, providing encouragement and feedback. According to Nation (2015), an effective program stresses the quality of reading: Does the reading provide sufficient repetition of language items, and in sufficient variety? That is, is the reader able to build word families, rather than memorize discrete vocabulary items? In Ponniah's study in 2011, post-test results between students who learned the vocabulary set incidentally and those who learned the same set by using their dictionaries to look up the meaning demonstrated the difference between the ability to use the new vocabulary between the two groups. The post-test consisted of writing down the definition of the vocabulary

item and using it in different sentences and confirmed that learners who used dictionaries were unable to use the consciously learned words in sentences (Ponniah, 2011).

Familiarity with word families affects reading comprehension. The generally accepted level is knowledge of at least 3000 word families, consisting of a base form and its derived and inflected forms, for comprehension (Coady, 1997; Restrepo Ramos, 2015). One problem is how to get beginning readers to this level, when they do not yet have the vocabulary to read well enough to acquire more vocabulary - the so-called beginner's paradox. Coady's solution to this problem is concomitantly train new readers in sight words (1997). Graded readers provide another solution, books with controlled vocabulary and grammar to allow beginning readers to read extensively. Hill's assessment of graded readers (2001) provides a comprehensive overview of the practical use of graded readers in class.

Although the numerous research articles cited all make claims for vocabulary acquisition through extensive reading, the quantitative measurement of vocabulary gains is problematic. A test that only measures the meaning of discrete items will fail to measure other significant gains in the form-meaning-use structure (Webb, 2005). The sensitivity of the measurement instrument itself affects results, and various studies show gains of between 6.4 and 20% (Waring & Takaki, 2003).

### 3-2 Comprehension (grammar)

For the purpose of acquiring or improving L2 grammar skills, the intensive approach is used more frequently than the extensive. Gorsuch and Taguchi (2009) described "the prevailing attitude towards reading merely as a means of introducing L2 grammar and lexis" rather than as an exercise in fluency by which grammar and other skills might be allowed to develop incidentally (251-252).

As noted in section 3-1, because reading comprehension is a holistic skill, measurement of grammar gains by testing is difficult. One example of the difficulty inherent in "testing" grammar proficiency is the test item, "What happened to the country which I visited last year?" (pre- and post-test, sentence patterns, In-

tensive English Program, Tottori University of Environmental Studies, 2015). Items such as this focus entirely on form, or sentence pattern, while ignoring meaning and use. This item may in fact confuse fluent readers because it appears on the test without context, and contains three pronouns without antecedents. Outside of East Asia, neither EFL students nor native speakers learn English sentence patterns, but both groups are able to read and comprehend English texts. It can be inferred that if a student understands the text, they understand the grammar contained in it, at least in context.

Cirocki's (2009b) detailed analysis of the results of an ER program for Polish secondary students demonstrated clear and measurable gains in "reading skill, vocabulary growth, productive skills, (inter) cultural competence and secondary learners' overall gains" (256). All students evinced improvement in reading and vocabulary and there were gains in reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammar measured as a whole. As in this instance, although testing can illuminate general improvement, it is difficult to isolate grammar from other skills.

Similarly, in their study of ER for adolescent EFL students in South Korea, Lee, Schallert, and Kim (2014) highlighted the intrinsic link between knowledge of grammar and skill in reading, asserting that "grammar knowledge is a significant predictor of reading comprehension" (39). These authors admit, "there have been few empirical studies that have explicitly examined incidental L2 grammar learning from reading" (40). In analyzing aspects of grammar not overtly dependent on context, such as knowledge of combined articles + prepositions, however, the percentage improvements on grammar test scores did indicate that, per unit of study time, gains from extensive reading were similar to those made through traditional classroom translation exercises (Lee, Schallert & Kim, 2014).

### 3-3 Fluency (reading rate)

There is wide acceptance of the positive relationship among reading comprehension, reading rate (fluency) and vocabulary (Jeon & Day, 2015). Although fluency and comprehension are closely interrelated, they will

be examined separately in this paper. It is first necessary to define reading fluency. Fluent reading is what good readers (of any language) do, most of the time, when they read. Particularly in the L1, reading comprehension assumes reading fluency. According to Fuch (Fuch, et al., 2001), correlations between fluency skills and reading comprehension have been reported as high as  $r = .81$  to  $.90$  between oral passage reading fluency and reading comprehension. Reading rate, the number of words read per minute, is one measure of fluency. Fluent native readers usually read between 250 and 300 words (lexical units) per minute (Grabe, 2010).

However, L2 readers seldom achieve a speed of 250 words per minute. Slow readers are unable to hold enough detail in short term memory to permit decoding of the overall message of the text (Bell, 2001). Agreement has not been reached on the minimum rate needed for comprehension. Some researchers have cited 180 words per minute, claiming that speeds below this are too slow for efficient comprehension (Anderson, 1999). Grabe suggests that 150 words is the minimum rate required (2010). In the case of first year Japanese university students, the average reading rate hovers around 100 words per minute, well below the level necessary for comprehension (Takeuchi & Begole, 2015). Carver suggests that the minimum acceptable level of comprehension of text content is 64% (2000).

First year university students in Japan can be considered beginning readers, although they have studied English for six years. According to Sarich (2014), Japan test scores of reading proficiency as measured by standardized tests such as TOEIC and TOEFL remain among the lowest in Asia. Japanese high school “reading” classes focus on language development and translation rather than reading (Sakurai, 2015). A number of specialists have commented on a common practice in intensive reading lessons, where texts are often treated as vehicles for the presentation, practice, manipulation, and consolidation of language points, rather than the encouragement of reading itself. In Bell’s 2001 study, students were divided into two groups. One group practiced intensive reading, while the other group read extensively. The “extensive” group was ex-

posed to a regime of graded readers while the “intensive” group studied short texts followed by comprehension questions. Bell found that subjects exposed to “extensive” reading achieved both significantly faster reading speeds and significantly higher scores on measures of reading comprehension (2001). In another study, university level EFL students in Hong Kong who participated in a popular literature class that emphasized reading for content and enjoyment, including some self-selected reading, made superior gains on measures of vocabulary and reading rate, when compared to students enrolled in a traditional academic skills class (Lao & Krashen, 2000).

#### 3-4 Writing (fluency)

Han (2010) observed that reading and writing were disconnected in education until the 1980s, when researchers began to study their reciprocal benefits. Citing recent efforts to combine ER with English writing coursework in South Korea, he observed that ER has increased students’ familiarity with English and ability to express their ideas in it (Han, 2010). In 2009, Janopoulos observed that considerable literary exposure is required for “sensitivity to text features and those writing conventions that will carry over to the act of writing” (p. 431), claiming a direct connection between quantity of reading for pleasure and quality of writing. Janopoulos added that improvements in writing directly attributable to ER require daily commitment over a sustained period, teacher encouragement, absence of interruptions, and avoidance of testing (2009).

Cirocki’s 2006/2007 Polish secondary school study demonstrated measurable gains in productive skills within six weeks to three months of an English language program in which two-thirds of class time, plus additional time outside of class, was dedicated to extensive reading (Cirocki, 2009). In addition to marked elevation of confidence and fluency in speaking, the students “were able to write different types of texts with ease, without committing serious grammar mistakes. Also, less L 1 transfer in structures was noted” (Cirocki, 2009, p. 538). Girocki (2009) contrasted this with learners whose study did not include ER: While these learners showed gains in ease of production, he

found no significant improvement in their style or grammar.

Mermelstein (2015) found gains in fluency, content, organization, language use, vocabulary, and mechanics in descriptive writing assignments in five studies on ER programs of various lengths. Mermelstein's findings demonstrated that the pleasure component of reading was a key factor in improvement, with limited selection of reading materials and shorter program lengths detrimental to overall progress (2015). Similarly, Janopoulos (2009) admitted to problems measuring the amount of reading students actually did when not supervised, and posited that evidence is insufficient for the proportion of gains due to ER alone, much less for the ideal proportion of course time that should be devoted to ER if improvement in writing is the primary goal.

### 3-5 Motivation (affect)

According to Widodo (2009), one barrier to effective implementation of ER in secondary and tertiary curricula is low student motivation and autonomy. Cirocki (2009) observed that learners rarely undertake L2 of their own volition, but usually because outside agents force L2 on them; this necessitates the teacher's role as a motivator, whose task is to make the material interesting. Curricula often leave little room for leisurely reading, and some researchers have indicated that the rise of screen-based media has fostered the development of reading habits appropriate to web browsing but detrimental to ER (Ariyanto, 2009). To counter this trend, some educators advise physically demonstrating the act of reading during class in order to be a role model for students who may not have had any experience with this reading, as opposed to translating. The absence of motivation and autonomy is a barrier that must be overcome for ER to be effective.

This barrier is obvious when ER is attempted with students whose study habits have been highly structured with clear teacher-enforced goals. In contrast to the virtuous circle noted later in section 4.1, a vicious circle is created when learners have unpleasant associations with L2 reading and would prefer to do as little of it as possible (Coady, 1997, p. 273). Sivasubramaniam (2009) called EFL classrooms breeding grounds

for student anxiety and reticence, demotivating students and frustrating teachers. Although students have had years to develop habits and methods antithetical to ER, the act of ER itself helps teach them to process new concepts, which can in turn motivate them to read more (Sivasubramaniam, 2009). Through exercises in breaking down L2 learner aliteracy during programs of several months, Fujigaki (2009) suggested that students have latent motivation, which ER awakens; stimulating dormant motivation requires that ER be an integral part of coursework sustained over the long term.

Taboada and McElvany (2009) contrasted the depth and frequency of students' reading from intrinsic motivation with that done simply for the requirements of coursework. It is important to allow students access to texts in genres and fields that interest them. In his experiments with ER in New Zealand classrooms, Macalister writes, "Well-chosen books can, therefore, encourage students to read, perhaps even the reluctant and poorly motivated ones" (211). This is why researchers such as Loucky have accorded a high priority to individualized instruction: "Only by careful individual diagnosis of each student's...total estimated reading grade levels can ESL/EFL teachers really help their students to improve as fast and as much as possible. Otherwise, no one will ever really know their levels, or their rates of improvement" (Loucky, 2009, p. 65). Taboada and McElvany (2009) added that for ER to be most effective, teachers must foster classroom cohesion and know students' individual areas of interest as well as their level.

Kirchhoff (2015) experimented with several strategies for building and maintaining student motivation, such as student reading teams and oral book evaluations called "book talk." Students' enjoyment of these activities, which required them to read extensively, produced the stimulus to continue with ER, with face-to-face student collaboration being the biggest motivator.

Taboada and McElvany (2009) described five motivational processes: interest, autonomy support, self-efficacy, social collaboration, and mastery goals. Mastery goals are an important aspect of ER, in that motivation is enhanced because the reading is not tied to any spe-

cific curriculum goal, but instead allows language skills to develop as a natural side effect of extensive L2 exposure in fields of students' interest. These authors contend, however, that ER done in the classroom may be counterproductive due to time constraints and interruptions, making it all the more important that students are able to manage their own time. Chief among means of developing time management skills is the idea of teacher intervention as a kind of scaffolding, which can provide copious support in the initial stages. Support is removed gradually as student motivation is cultivated through habitual ER. Sivasubramaniam (2009) advocates initial teacher mediation to avoid student selection of inappropriate or unchallenging texts. This support should be phased out.

Finally, the consensus appears to be that for the affective benefits of ER to be realized, it is crucial that ER be maintained as a longitudinal strategy and fundamental facet of EFL and ESL curricula, rather than a single semester or year. Jeon and Day (2015) emphasized the importance of sustaining ER programs over the long term, insisting, "teachers and policy makers need to realize that it takes time to see the benefits of an ER program" in student motivation (306).

#### 4. Discussion and suggestions

##### 4-1 Effectiveness

The numerous studies cited in this paper support the use of extended reading as an effective part of an L2 program. Why is it not made better use of in Japan? As Macalister (2010) said, teachers' intuition

has been backed by research and there is no shortage of evidence that extensive reading contributes to successful language learning. The impact of extensive reading on different skill areas including listening, reading comprehension and speed, writing, vocabulary, examination performance, and attitudes to reading in the target language has been well documented (p. 60).

Coady (1997) described the virtuous circle engendered by extensive reading: the reader reads faster → understands better → reads more → enjoys reading → reads faster (p. 273). Pennington, Yukimaru, and Tanoue described the same virtuous circle in their 2011 presentation at the First World Congress on Ex-

tensive Reading in Kyoto, noting that a reader can enter the circle at any point (W. Pennington, personal communication [email], 2011). In another study of students' reactions to extensive reading, student reaction was very positive; students reported gaining confidence in reading, and expressed enthusiasm about continuing to read in English (Lao & Krashen, 2000).

However, in a survey of 36 New Zealand-based ESL teachers, although 34 teachers responded that they thought students could learn English through extensive reading, only 11 of them included extensive reading as part of the curriculum (Macalister (2010). Macalister further argued that "Extensive reading needs to be promoted through teacher education, new research, changes in course design, raising awareness among administrators and managers, and improved resource provision" (p.59). Jeon and Day (2015) in their meta-analysis of 71 extensive reading research samples found that ER programs resulted in greater reading proficiency than intensive or traditional reading approaches. In another study of students' reactions to extensive reading, student reaction was very positive; students reported gaining confidence in reading, and expressed enthusiasm about continuing to read in English (Lao & Krashen, 2000).

##### 4-2 Limitations

Although it is obvious that extensive reading is effective, it is necessary to understand the limitations of extensive reading. For example, researchers have noted that the benefits of ER take time to appear (Grabe, 2010; Yamashita, 2008). Although increases in vocabulary have been noted in studies as short as one month (Pigada & Schmitt, 2006), increases in comprehension and fluency take longer to appear. Takeuchi and Begole (2015) tracked students through a three-semester course, but found only a 20% average increase in reading rate, from 100 to 120 words per minute, still below the threshold for easy comprehension. Yamashita (2008) noted that comprehension gains in a 15-week course were greater than gains in vocabulary and knowledge of syntax. Because the results of extensive reading take time to appear, it is feared that ER may be dropped from the curriculum when "results" are not immediately apparent.

#### 4-3 Practical considerations

If both teachers and students feel that extensive reading is useful and effective, what are the barriers to implementation of ER programs? Some teachers may feel unsure of what extensive reading is, or may not feel confident about setting up an extensive reading program. Online resources are available from the Extensive Reading Foundation in English ([http://erfoundation.org/ERF\\_Guide.pdf](http://erfoundation.org/ERF_Guide.pdf)), Korean ([http://erfoundation.org/ERF\\_Guide-K.pdf](http://erfoundation.org/ERF_Guide-K.pdf)), and Japanese ([http://erfoundation.org/ERF\\_GuideJ.pdf](http://erfoundation.org/ERF_GuideJ.pdf)). The Japan Extensive Reading Association (日本多読学会) has information available at <http://jera-tadoku.jp/> in Japanese.

Another practical consideration is access to the number of books, preferably graded readers, needed to allow for the variety and self-selected reading that are hallmarks of extensive reading (Waring & McLean 2015). The cost of purchasing a library can be a significant hurdle to implementing an ER program. However, there is no rule that books must be printed on paper. In this era of e-books and online readers, it is possible to design a program without purchasing a great number of books. Arnold (2009) has designed and documented an extensive reading program in German done entirely online. He reported both affective and linguistic gains. As a resource, Maruzen has recently made available graded readers from at least two publishers online (<https://elib.maruzen.co.jp/app/eguide/information.html>). This commercial service is already in use at Chuo University, Kyushu University, Morioka University, and Tottori University of Environmental Studies.

A third potential barrier is the lack of textbooks that incorporate extensive reading. There are a few books, notably the Reading Power series published by Penguin/Longman, but the lack of textbooks makes it difficult to convince teachers and administrators of the legitimacy of extensive reading. Brown (2009) makes a strong case for creating a greater variety of textbooks incorporating ER.

#### 4-4 Resistance

In Macalister's survey of teacher attitudes (2009), teachers cited time, resources, student expectations, and curriculum changes as barriers to including extensive reading. Some teachers feel that extensive reading

will take away limited class time. However, most extensive reading programs use class time only for documentation, discussion, and guidance, while students do most reading outside of class. Documentation of books/pages read can be accomplished with simple reading logs, supplemented by short book reports (Macalister, 2010; Takeuchi, & Begole, 2015). The problem of resources can be overcome by using online sources for both books and assessment.

For teachers who prefer to give quizzes, quizzes are now available online for most graded readers available in Japan via MReader (<http://mreader.org/index.php>), an online placement test is available from the Extensive Reading Foundation (<http://erfoundation.org/wordpress/the-erf-placement-test/>) and multiple-choice cloze quizzes are available from Oxford (<https://elt.oup.com/student/bookwormsleveltest/?cc=us&selLanguage=en>). Another simple option is to link the number of words read to the final grade as Sakurai (2015) demonstrated. In short, neither time nor resources are insurmountable obstacles to adding extensive reading to the curriculum.

A more difficult problem is student and teacher expectations. One preconceived notion is the idea that extensive reading is only effective for "good" students; that low-level or unmotivated students will not respond. This has been shown to be a fallacy by a number of studies (Fujigaki, 2009; Nishizawa, Yoshioka, & Itoh, 2006 & 2008; Mason & Krashen, 1997). In addition, both teachers and students in Japan expect teachers to "teach" (Matikainen, 2015; Sakurai, 2015). The traditional high school English class is teacher-centered. Moving to a student-centered method, where students choose what to read and the teacher's primary responsibility is to create the right conditions for reading (Arnold, 2009), goes against this cultural expectation. In addition, teachers are constrained by MEXT guidelines. The way that high stakes assessment measures such as the Center Test (for potential university students) and TOEIC have been constructed, used, and interpreted, exerts an enormous impact on English education (Sarich, 2009).

## 5. Conclusion

As shown in the more than 80 articles read for this

literature review (not all of them cited in this paper), extensive reading is an effective tool that should be used to enhance students' learning.

Returning to the ten principles cited in the introduction, we have shown that “easy” materials (comprehensible materials) are most suitable, and that these materials on a wide variety of topics are readily available in Japan. Reynolds and Bai (2013) found that reader choice made a significant difference in vocabulary acquisition. Learners should read as much as possible, at least 30 minutes a week, and should read more to make further gains (Grabe, 2010; Kirchhoff, 2009; Takeuchi & Begole, 2015). Several studies demonstrated that reading motivation is improved by successful extensive reading (Coady, 1997; Kirchhoff, 2015; Taboada & McElvany, 2009). Studies cited in this paper also showed that faster reading is more effective (Anderson, 1999; Bell, 2001; Grabe, 2010). All variations of extensive reading, including assisted reading (Taguchi, Takayasu-Maass, & Gorsuch, 2004), free voluntary reading (Lao & Krashen, 2000), and sustained silent reading (Gorsuch & Taguchi, 2008; Takase, 2009) are individual and silent. In all studies cited, the teacher was a guide to students, helping students to select books at the correct level (Sivasubramaniam, 2009; Takeuchi & Begole, 2015), and tracking reading progress.

In addition, we found that extensive reading is effective in any language, examining studies of English, French, German, Japanese, and Mandarin L2 reading, and that extensive reading improves vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, and motivation. We believe that greater use of extensive reading at the university level in Japan would improve students' English proficiency.

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